

CONSTITUTION

Ted Sider, Metaphysics

1. THE ANTINOMY OF CONSTITUTION

- i) The piece of clay that existed Monday continues to exist on Tuesday after being given statue shape
- ii) The sculptor *creates* a statue, which exists on Tuesday but not on Monday,
- iii) If i) and ii) are true, then the statue and the piece of clay are two different objects that on Tuesday are made up of exactly the same matter.
- iv) Therefore, distinct material objects can be made up of the same matter at a single time

Antinomy: an argument with apparently true premises leading to an apparently absurd conclusion.

2. THE JUST-MATTER THEORY

Just-matter theory (“mereological essentialism”): the only objects that exist are *quantities of matter*. These are things that are “defined by their parts”, i.e., a necessary and sufficient condition for their continued existence is that all of their constituent matter persists (no matter what its configuration)

3. THE TAKEOVER THEORY

Takeover theory: Objects come in various *sorts*. Each sort is associated with certain persistence conditions. Distinct material objects can never be made of the same matter. So sometimes a single object falls under more than one sort. In such cases, one of the object’s sorts (its “dominant sort”) determines what its persistence conditions are.

outpiece: piece of clay located outdoors, no matter how shaped

inpiece: piece of clay located indoors, no matter how shaped

4. NIHILISM

Nihilism: Only *simples* (i.e., things with no smaller parts) exist

“There is a statue on the table”

“There are some simples arranged statuewise on some other simples arranged tablewise”

Atomless gunk: an object that contain no simples as parts — i.e., each of its parts has still smaller parts

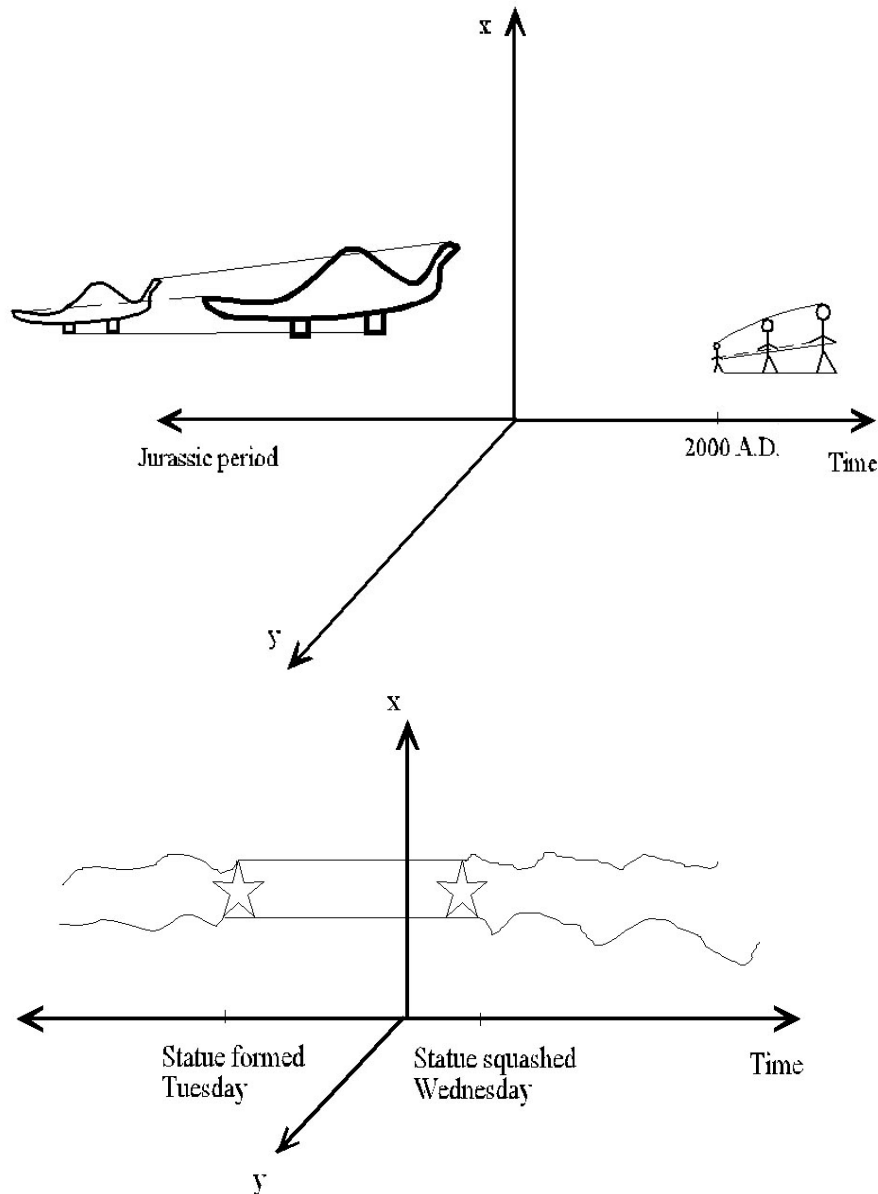
5. COHABITATION

Problem of similarity: since the statue and the piece of clay are made of the same matter, how can one be more fragile than the other?

Problem of parts: things are nothing over and above their parts. So how can two objects be made up of the same parts?

6. FOUR-DIMENSIONALISM

Four-dimensionalism: Time is like space, in terms of: i) existence, ii) relativity of here- and now-, and iii) parthood



7. CONSTITUTION AND PERSONAL IDENTITY